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QUESTIONS and ANSWERS

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EGYPT.

Q. What is a Christian missionary?

A. A Christian missionary is one who is sent to tell the story of Christ's love, and to spread His kingdom.

Q. To what foreign lands has the United Presbyterian Church of North America sent missionaries?

A. To Egypt, India and the Sudan.

Q. Where is Egypt?

A. Egypt is in the northeastern part of Africa, lying between the Great Sahara Desert and the Red Sea, and stretching from the Sudan to the Mediterranean.

Q. By what route do missionaries usually go to Egypt?

A. From New York to Naples, and change steamers at Naples; thence to Alexandria.

Q. How long does it take for the journey?

A. From fifteen to twenty days.

Q. How large is Egypt?

A. 500,000 square miles.

Q. How much of it can be cultivated?

A. 13,000 square miles.

Q. What is the population?

A. 12,000,000.

Q. What river flows through Egypt?

A. The Nile.

Q. How does it benefit Egypt?

A. By overflowing once a year it makes the Nile Valley one of the richest in the world.

Q. What does Egypt produce?

A. Cotton, sugar-cane, wheat, barley, beans and lentils, corn, rice, onions, flax and hemp.

Q. What are the fruits?

A. Dates, figs, oranges, grapes, apricots, pomegranates, melons and bananas.

Q. What kind of trees grow in Egypt?

A. Trees are scarce. The date-tree is the tree of Egypt, but there are acacia, lebbek, sycamore, fig, willow and tamaresk.

Q. What are the animals of Egypt?

A. Because there are so few forests there are very few wild animals. The fox, hyena and jackal are in the mountains and desert. The cat, dog, camel, cow, donkey, horse, sheep, goat and buffalo are found in Egypt.

Q. What is the climate?

A. Dry in the south; cold between November and March and very hot the remaining months. In the north there is more rain and the heat more humid.

Q. What are chief cities?

A. Cairo, the capital, and Alexandria, the chief seaport.

Q. What other towns and cities of interest?

A. Tanta, Monsurah, Zakazik, Beni, Assiut and Luxor.

Q. What are the streets like in these cities?

A. In Cairo, Alexandria and portions of other cities, the streets are such as are found in southern Europe, but many of the streets are narrow, irregular lanes, like our alleys, where sometimes all travel is blocked.

Q. What is the appearance of the country roads?

A. The roads are raised above the level country, so that the waters of the Nile will not overflow. When the waters go down people make bridle paths over the fields.

Q. What are the means of travel?

A. Railroads, the Nile River and

canals. Travel on roads is by horse, donkey or camel. In the chief cities electric cars, carriages and automobiles.

Q. What is the history of Egypt?

A. It is a very, very old country. In the very early history of the world the people were civilized. They studied science, art and literature. This is proven by the discoveries made in recent years and the interpretations of the many inscriptions on the pyramids, temples, obelisks, statues and tombs.

Q. What is the language of the people?

A. Arabic. English is being taught, and used by many.

Q. What is the character of the people?

A. Hospitable, courteous, affectionate, eager to learn, willing to be led. They are shrewd and close in money matters and differ very much from

Christians as to truth and honesty. They lack energy, grit, exactness and self-control.

Q. What is the condition of the women?

A. Among the upper classes many are as free as any, while others live in close seclusion. In the middle classes there is less freedom and less seclusion. All women are treated as inferiors. Only 6 in 1000 can read.

Q. How do the women spend their time?

A. Peasant women help in the farm work. Others bake and cook in the simplest way and give little attention to children and cleanliness. Much time is spent in idleness and gossip. Clothes are made in a very careless way and mending neglected.

Q. What is the dress of the women?

A. Peasant women wear long, loose

navy blue gowns. In the Delta (that part north of Cairo) the gowns are short, wide trousers under and a thick girdle around the waist. In the towns European styles are adopted. Jewelry is used very generally, often very heavy. The hair is usually worn in long braids. A pretty handkerchief is worn on the head, tied in a knot over the forehead.

Q. What is worn out of doors?

A. For the low class, a black cotton sheet that hides the body and face. The higher class wears a black silk covering and if they wish to conceal themselves a white or black silk veil is fastened just below the eyes.

Q. What is the dress of the men?

A. Peasants wear turbans and navy blue cotton robes over loose trousers. The middle class and wealthy men wear flowing robes of different kinds.

Professional men and government employees wear European styles, with the fez and black tassel, which is worn inside the house as well as on the street.

Q. What are houses like?

A. In the European sections of the cities the houses are like the buildings in this country. The oriental houses are built around a hollow square. They are all flat roofed and have no heating system. Most of the poor live in the courts, sleeping in the rooms only in cold weather. The houses in the villages are built of mud.

Q. How are the houses furnished?

A. European furniture is being used more and more; divans and Persian rugs are very generally used. No furniture is used among the poorer classes. Mats and cushions are used for sleeping and for seats. Trays on low stools serve as tables.

Q. What do the people eat?

A. Among the low class, bread made of wheat or corn is the principal food, and olives, cheese, onions, pickled turnips, radishes, etc., are eaten with it. Lentils and beans are much used. Among the higher classes meats, vegetables, rice, etc., richly cooked, are the principal food stuffs.

Q. What are the social customs?

A. Visits are lengthy. Greetings are elaborate. Fixed expressions of good will and the replies are in general use. Black coffee, lemonade or other sweet drinks must always be served to a visitor, and often sweet meats with the drink. Cigarettes are offered to all male guests and to native ladies.

Q. What are the marriage customs?

A. A Mohammedan is allowed to have four wives, but he prefers usually to have one. Divorce is easy and it is less expensive. Among the Copts

divorcee is rare. With both classes marriages are arranged by the parents. The younger people seldom meet until after the arrangement is made, and often not until the wedding day. The marriage is at the house of the groom, where the young girl is taken with great display and ceremony. Sons remain with their wives in their father's home. Marriages between cousins are favored so that none of the money goes out of the family. Large sums of money are spent for marriage feasts and often debts are incurred.

Q. What are the funeral customs?

A. As soon as the life is gone, the house is filled with friends and neighbors, who wail and weep and cause the worst kind of confusion. The body is usually buried in a few hours, but the loud mourning is kept up no matter how long the body may be in the house.

Copts use coffins made at the house. The clothes of the dead are put into it. Mohammedans use a bier and winding sheet. Their dead are buried in a sitting position. They hire mourners and the mourning is continued for weeks, months and even years. The faces of the mourners are stained with indigo; the head covering and dress is daubed with mud. They leap, gesticulate, wildly slap the face and shriek.

Q. What is the government of the country?

A. Egypt has been ruled by Turkey for centuries. Ismail I. involved his country in such a heavy debt that he was forced by his English and French creditors to let them oversee his financial administration. The Egyptians rebelled against this. The French declined to join in suppressing the rebellion, so the British undertook it

alone. They assumed a "temporary occupation" of the country and the supervision of the army and finances. This continued until 1914, when Turkey joined the Central Powers. Britain then assumed a permanent protectorate over Egypt, dethroned the Khedive, abolished the title, and proclaimed the new ruler as Sultan. This man was a member of the old royal family, but loyal to Britain.

Q. What is the attitude of the government to our missions?

A. It is friendly, but in many ways Mohammedans are more favored than Christians. The English ministers do not wish to arouse the jealousy or suspicion of the Mohammedans.

Q. What is the religion of the people?

A. 9,000,000 are Moslems, 600,000 are Copts, 25,000 are Jews, and the others

Greeks, Catholics, etc. The Copts are the people among whom our mission is working—and trying to reach the Mohammedans also.

Q. Who are the Copts?

A. They descended from the ancient Egyptian. They were Christians in the first century, but their religion became corrupted. When the country was conquered by the Mohammedans, only a small remnant were true to Christianity. After thirteen centuries the descendants of this remnant still cling to the dead church.

Q. What is the religious belief of the Copts?

A. Their religion seems much like Roman Catholicism—a Patriarch in Cairo much the same as the Pope in Rome. The average Copt thinks his religion is to be baptized; to abstain from certain kinds of food during a part of

the year; to keep feasts and to attend church occasionally.

Q. Do they accept the Bible?

A. When our mission was first established it was almost an unknown book to them, but they believed it to be the Word of God. It has been widely distributed among them and is now read in Arabic in their church but in such a way as to have no power.

Q. What is Mohammedanism?

A. Its creed is "There is no God but Allah, and Mohammed is his prophet," "Allah" is the All-powerful and All-merciful. This religion degrades woman and encourages vice. The mercy of Allah is to forgive the sins of all Mohammedans if they will observe certain forms of the religion. Jesus is one of their lesser prophets, who will come to judge the world at the last. The Bible of the Moham-

medan is the Koran. It is a religious duty to repeat the Moslem prayer five times a day, to go to a Mosque for prayer on Friday, to eat between sunset and sunrise, instead of by day, during the sacred month of Ramadan, to give to the poor and to drink no wine. Most Mohammedans neglect these duties if they can do so without being discovered.



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